

FOREIGN NEWS

IN CHARGE OF
LAVINIA L. DOCK

ORGANIZATION NOTES

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE DANISH NURSES' ASSOCIATION

WE were glad to receive the constitution of the Danish Nurses' Association. It was sent us by some thoughtful friend whose name, however, did not come with it, so that we can only make this general acknowledgment. We give an abstract of its leading features, space not permitting of a full reprint.

OBJECTS.

To advance the interests of the nursing profession, both in practical personal ways and on broad general lines.

MEMBERSHIP.

Members are active, associate, contributing, and honorary. Active members must have had three years' hospital training, or, in the case of nurses having graduated before January 1, 1901, one year of hospital and three of private duty or two of hospital and two of private duty are accepted as equivalents. The training must have been received in hospitals which are approved by the committee as maintaining a fair standard. Women who have not had the training required for active membership may be admitted as associates. Should they subsequently take the requisite course they may become active members. Contributing members may be women or men who contribute a certain fixed sum yearly or who make a life payment to the association. Honorary members may be women or men who have rendered special service to the association. Application for active membership is made by filling out the answers to a set of questions relating to the work and experience of the applicant. It is passed upon by an examining committee, and if endorsed, is presented at a regular business meeting. A majority vote elects, a quorum being present. Rejected applicants, if supported by ten active members, may appeal to the whole association at a general assembly, and if half of the active members are present the rejected ones may be voted in over the committee's decision by a majority vote. Active members are required to wear the badge of the association, and the annual fee is four kronen (about a dollar) for active, three for associate, and not less than two for contributing members. A "sick benefit club" exists within the association; as the details of its management are not included in the constitution, it is probably voluntary and has its own rules. The officers are as usual, with a small Executive Committee who rotate, passing out of office after a three-years' term. The constitution provides that a certain proportion of these must be nurses in active work, *not* holding positions of authority, and that one must be a private-duty nurse. Besides this Executive Committee, or "Upper House,"

there is a larger committee, or "Lower House," serving for two years in rotation, and elected from the active members at the general meeting. The general assembly has, within the limits marked out by the constitution, the supreme authority in all matters coming before the association. The vote is cast only by active members who are present at a meeting.

Besides the business meetings and general assembly, the association holds social and educational gatherings, where lectures may be heard and work and professional questions discussed. The duties of officers are about like ours, and provisions for standing and sub-committees, routine work, finances, and the expulsion of unworthy members are about the same, the greatest care having been taken, apparently greater than we take, to keep everything on a democratic basis.

One curious feature of the constitution is that it provides for the possible disbanding of the association,—a provision that we do not now recollect ever having seen in a similar instrument, and which seems to indicate that the organization was felt to be a doubtful experiment, as it must have been a bold step forward for nurses accustomed to the conservatism of the Old World.

If the committee feel disbanding to be expedient and proper, the officers are to bring a notice for disorganization before the general assembly. Three-fourths of the active members must be present, and of these four-fifths of all the votes cast are required for disbanding. If these conditions are not complied with, a new general assembly may be called on eight-days' notice, and disbanding may then be resolved upon by four-fifths of the votes actually cast, without regard to the whole number present. The assembly must then also decide what disposition shall be made of the property of the association.

Let us hope that this preparation for the worst may have been made in vain. The Danish nurses will advance farther in ten years' time by means of their own self-governing association, than in a couple of hundred years under the queer old methods of restriction and repression, and we want them to join the International Council of Nurses, and, no doubt, some day they will.

ADMISSION TO AND WORK OF THE NURSES IN THE VICTORIAN ORDER, CANADA

At the time of the inception of the Victorian Order of Nurses for Canada, not only was a Royal Charter granted (by which His Excellency the Governor-General of Canada was appointed patron), but Her Majesty gave the nurses her permission to wear the same badge and uniform as those worn by the Queen's Nurses in Great Britain. The feeling, therefore, that should inspire and uplift the Victorian Order nurse, going out to serve those of her fellows who are attacked by disease, should be something akin to that of a soldier who has volunteered to serve his country.

At the expiration of a candidate's term of training she is recommended by the chief lady superintendent to the Executive Council for admission to the order, and whenever it is practicable she goes to head-quarters, which are at Ottawa, to receive her badge and diploma. In the presence of the members of the Executive Council, Her Excellency the wife of the Governor-General, who is honorary president of the order, pins on the badge, addressing her in the following words:

"You have been recommended to the Board of Governors by the chief lady superintendent of the order as a nurse professing the qualifications and training which our order requires, and as one who has proved through your training in district nursing your efficiency in all your nursing work and your willingness to observe all the regulations of the order.

"We therefore welcome you very heartily to the ranks of the order, and we enlist you for active service for two years.

"May you be enabled to carry into action the true spirit of the order, and may God's best blessing rest upon you."

The nurse then signs the agreement. She is now a Victorian Order nurse, qualified to be appointed for a period of two years to any district where the order is at work. Should she express a preference for a special station, an effort is made to meet her wishes as far as possible. She may take up her duties under any of the following conditions: as head nurse in one of the small cottage hospitals, as head nurse of a district where two or more nurses are employed, as second nurse in either hospital or district, or as single nurse in a district.

Wherever the services of a nurse are required local committees are established, who give a guarantee to the Board of Governors that they will provide for the nurse's maintenance and salary and hold themselves responsible for her comfort and welfare. The nurse's salary is not less than three hundred dollars a year, with uniform, laundry, board, and lodging.

The nurse presents a report of her work to the Local Committee each month, and a copy of the same is sent to the chief lady superintendent, part of whose duty it is to visit the nurses at least once during the year.

In the cities district nursing alone is undertaken, but in the more remote country districts, where there are no trained nurses within reasonable reach, a few consecutive days may have to be given occasionally to one single case; but the extra hour on duty per diem must be qualified by extra hours off duty when the special need is over.

Where money sufficient to erect a proper hospital building cannot be raised at once, the nurse usually begins work in a small tenement-house. Such a house, capable of accommodating from four to ten patients, two nurses, and a maid, is rented and made as sanitary and comfortable as conditions and means will allow. The nurse's life for the first year or two in these rural districts is truly that of a pioneer!

In case of a major operation having to be performed, the nurse will probably convert the one room which serves her for both sitting- and dining-room into an operating-room—and only a nurse can appreciate the labor involved in fitting it for such a purpose. The water, dressings, etc., have all to be sterilized on the little cooking-stove, and it requires a woman not only thoroughly trained, but also possessed of ingenuity and abundant common-sense, to make the most of the very inadequate appliances at her disposal. Many nurses wonder how a talented woman who has spent years in a fine, well-equipped hospital is willing to apparently bury herself in a wild country district, but to do good work under such adverse conditions demands the very best material, physical, intellectual, and moral.

In one of these small tenement-houses in the course of two years over one hundred and fifty patients have been successfully nursed, many of whom were men and boys without homes, who must have died under the only other treatment procurable, that which could be got at a second- or third-rate hotel. The gratitude shown to the nurse by her patients, the admiration and regard for her

expressed by all who take an interest in the hospital, and the satisfaction of knowing that in a few months a new, properly equipped building and trained assistance will be at her disposal—surely these are things worth some sacrifice! There are too higher and holier compensations which strengthen her hands in well-doing.

Twenty-three branches of the order have been established in less than three years. In five of these the work has been carried on in cottage hospitals, hut just as fine results have been achieved by the nurse in the district. Many an infant owes his eyesight to her attention and to her carefully instructing the mother how to carry on the same treatment in her absence; many a mother has been saved from septicæmia by the precautions which only a trained nurse knows how to take; and cleanliness and order have been permanently established in not a few homes through the force of her example.

It is hoped that these sketches of the training and of the character of the work in the Victorian Order will appeal to many, and that the new year will bring into the ranks of the order women who are ready, by training, and willing, through love and the desire to serve, to obey the command,—

“Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it.”

CHARLOTTE MACLEOD,
Chief Lady Superintendent.

LETTERS

FROM OUR ENGLISH CORRESPONDENT

QUEEN VICTORIA AND THE PROFESSION OF NURSING

DEAR EDITOR: Just now, when we are all grieving over the death of our great and good Queen, and all eyes are turned upon her personality, a few words concerning her in her relation to nursing will be timely. The Queen's reign has seen the dawn and the extraordinary development of scientific nursing, for until the time of the Crimean War nursing, as we understand it, was unknown. Queen Victoria followed with the keenest interest the work of Miss Florence Nightingale and her colleagues in the Crimea, and later gave practical evidence of this by laying the foundation-stone of St. Thomas's Hospital when the present magnificent structure was erected, and the Nightingale School was founded in connection with it. Notable events in the Queen's reign in relation to nursing have been the establishment of the Army, Navy, and Indian Army Nursing Services. As at present constituted these organizations are merely the nucleus of what will eventually become efficient State departments for the careful nursing of our soldiers irrespective of rank. During her reign Queen Victoria paid constant visits to the Royal Military Hospital at Netley, and as a special mark of her recognition she instituted in 1883 the order of the Royal Red Cross “For zeal and devotion in providing for and nursing sick soldiers, sailors, and others with the army in the field, on board ship, or in hospitals.” Foreign as well as British subjects are eligible.

In 1887 the Queen Victoria Jubilee Institute was founded by her for supplying district nurses to the poor in their own homes. The Queen devoted to this purpose the sum of seventy thousand pounds, the Jubilee offering of the women of England, and it is with this branch of nursing that her name will be forever associated.